four sided and nearly smooth. Leaves opposite, sessile, ovate, acuminate, entire, smooth, with the margins and veins sometimes pubescent. The stalk commonly terminates in a simple one-sided raceme of flowers, although I have seen luxuriant specimens with two. The peduncles are extremely short, so that the raceme may without impropriety be denominated a spike. Calyx persistent, with five linear-subulate, finely serrulate leaves, which are reflexed in the ripe fruit. Corolla five times as long as the calyx, scarlet or crimson without, orange coloured within, the tube inflated and angular at top, the border divided into five acute, spreading segments. Stamens very short, inserted into the mouth of the corolla between the segments; anthers oblong-heart shaped. Germ small, superior, ovate. Style longer than the corolla, jointed near its base and bearded at the extremity. Capsule double, consisting of two, cohering, one celled, globular portions, seated on a common receptacle.

The Spigelia is a mucilaginous plant, with a mild and not very disagreeable taste. The infusion and decoction of the root and leaves afford a flocculent precipitate with alcohol. They are discoloured but not precipitated by silicated potash. They have little sensibility to gelatin, al-